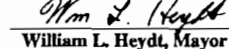




WEST PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
DESIGN GUIDELINES

HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
APRIL 2001



Introduction

The Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) has developed the following design guidelines to assist the board when reviewing applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness in the new West Park Historic District. These guidelines will be used by the HARB as a reference tool when making rulings on cases in the West Park Historic District. However the guidelines may also be helpful to homeowners in the West Park Historic District who are interested in making alterations to the exterior of their properties. After reading the guidelines a homeowner should have gained knowledge on the history of the neighborhood in which they live and be able to propose appropriate treatments for the exterior of their properties.

How to use the Design Guidelines

The design guidelines are divided into three parts:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1) The History of West Park | Pages 2-4 |
| 2) The Architectural Style Guide for the West Park Historic District | Pages 5-6 |
| 3) The West Park Architectural Elements Treatment Matrix | Pages 7-9 |

The users of the guidelines can easily refer to a particular section by locating the corresponding page number above. If a user has further questions they may contact the Bureau of Planning and Zoning at 610-437-7613.

West Park Historic District Adoption Process

The West Park Historic District was introduced to City Council on October 4, 2000. After numerous public meetings and lengthy discussions City Council approved the ordinance on December 20, 2000. However the Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission (P.H.M.C.) had to certify the district as historically significant before the ordinance could go into effect. On February 21, 2001 the P.H.M.C. certified the West Park Historic District and the ordinance became effective the same day. This means that before work is performed to the exterior of a property in the West Park Historic District all requirements of the Historic District Ordinance must be met.

Historic District Ordinance Background

A historic district is an area with a distinctive character recalling architectural or historical heritage. Allentown's historic districts represent specific time periods of the City's growth, and most of the buildings within the districts retain their original appearance.

The City's authority to create historic districts stems from Pennsylvania state enabling legislation

commonly referred to as Historic District Act No. 167, adopted in 1961. This gives municipalities the authority to adopt historic district ordinances. Approximately seventy municipalities across the commonwealth have passed historic district ordinances protecting more than ninety historic districts. Allentown City Council adopted our Historic District Ordinance in September 1978.

The Ordinance was adopted to preserve the historic and architectural character of the exterior facades of structures, that can be seen from a public rights-of-way, in the historic districts. The ordinance does not require the restoration of homes to their original appearance, although many owners have chosen to do so. Rather, the ordinance requires that any changes made to properties within the districts be done in a manner that is in keeping with their historic character.

History of West Park Historic District

The City of Allentown first took steps to create the public park that would become known as West Park in 1906. Home construction in the areas surrounding the park began a few years earlier, following a continuum of home construction that was fanning out in all directions from the plat of Allentown originally known as Northampton Town. The earliest homes in this neighborhood were built just before the end of the nineteenth century and construction continued in the neighborhood until the area was completely built-out in the mid-1920's. Allentown had been experiencing tremendous economic and population growth which precipitated a continuous building boom from the 1880's through to the Great Depression in the 1930's. Construction activity was greatest around West Park during the years that followed the opening of the park. Earlier homes were constructed to the north of the park, with the blocks immediately adjacent to the east following next. Construction continued south and westward after the establishment of the park. Proximity to the park was fortuitous for the home developers who employed the latest in architectural styles in construction anticipating that they would attract the upwardly mobile of the expanding middle class.

The neighborhood surrounding West Park is primarily a residential one, though it includes several institutions, and some businesses; most businesses are located at the street level of residential buildings or have since been established as "home offices". Five institutional buildings are included in the district; the original Edward Harvey Memorial Nurses College, located at the southeast corner of N. 17th Street and Chew Street; Emmanuel Reformed Church located at the northeast corner of N. 16th Street and Chew Street; the Masonic Temple located at the southwest corner of N. Fulton St. and Linden Street; William Allen High School (originally known as Allentown High School) located along the west side of N. 17th Street between Linden Street and Turner Street; and Church of the Mediator, found in the southeast corner of N. West Street and Turner Street.

The majority of the homes are row homes, which is the typical type of home constructed in Allentown prior to the twentieth century. A transition in building form from dense and orderly soldier-in-a-row homes to looser duplex homes and single homes on narrow urban lots is captured in this district reflecting evolving trends in home construction in Allentown.

Most of the buildings in the area maintain a consistent setback from the street rights-of-way. Exceptions to this are the institutional buildings. Though most homes and rows of homes are afforded front yard space enough for flower gardens and small shrubbery, they are not consistently provided. The front porches of many rows of homes are immediately adjacent or in close proximity to the sidewalk, and provide the neighborhood with a common outdoor living room for residents to use practically three seasons of the year.

A transition in architectural styles is evident in the West Park historic district. Falling out of favor was the row home adaptation of the Victorian Queen Anne architectural style of the late nineteenth century, examples of which exist in the northern and eastern blocks of the district. Coming into fashion in the early twentieth century, was the Colonial Revival style. This style was adapted to the row home plan, as well as the less-dense duplex plan, which was gaining popularity. Examples are located in all areas of the neighborhood. Construction of single-family dwellings on compact urban lots was also gaining favor, however only a few are of Colonial Revival style. Other architectural styles displayed in this neighborhood include Arts and Crafts, Prairie School, and Shingle, though only a few of each exist. Three of the institutional buildings in the district display Classical Revival characteristics, one of the two churches is of Gothic Revival style. The other church has an original wing of Tudor half-timbered style and an addition constructed circa 1950 in a modern style with mixed half-timbered and gothic influences. The materials and building context are in keeping with the surrounding streetscape.

Two domestic architectural features that emerged in row home construction during the Victorian era of the Queen Anne style, the full width front porch, and the bay window, continued to be consistently employed on the Colonial Revival homes, as well as other emerging architectural styles. Turrets were still included on some homes, though other roofline variants were employed along rows such as gable-front gambrel roofs and pediments over dormers. Brick outer walls continue to be the preferred facade material, as in the late nineteenth century, though the color palette is expanded to include orange, brown, and pink. Some homes are constructed with stucco outer walls, often at the second story, and others display a first floor facade of stone. Quoins of brick are used in the facades of many Colonial Revival style homes.

Slate shingle and flat roofing systems continued to be used throughout the construction time period, however the use of terra cotta roofing tile is quite notable. Many are in continuous use to this day, though a few have been replaced with matching metal tiles. Most often the terra cotta roofing tiles are found on homes of Colonial Revival style, though it is also used on Prairie style homes and homes of Arts and Crafts style.

Since its inception, West Park been a green oasis intended for relaxed recreational pursuits and not for child's play or sport. Rather it is the site of the Band City's first band shell and includes rows of park benches for audience seating. The remainder of the 6.4-acre park is improved with meandering concrete sidewalks, a fountain and several war monuments that commemorate battalions of fighting men and women. It is landscaped with rare species of trees and shrubbery. It is a well-

defined urban green with homes found along Turner Street providing virtually a wall along the northern edge. The band shell and the Church of the Mediator provide the western boundary, the Masonic Temple creates a southern wall, and the eastern boundary of the park blends with the back yards of homes found along N. 15th Street. In all of Allentown, it is the only city park that so abruptly interjects greenery into the densely built-up concrete, asphalt, and brick urban fabric.

Architectural Style Guide West Park Historic District

The following are the three typical architectural styles found in the West Park Historic District
Shingle, Queen Anne, or Colonial Revival.

Late Victorian:

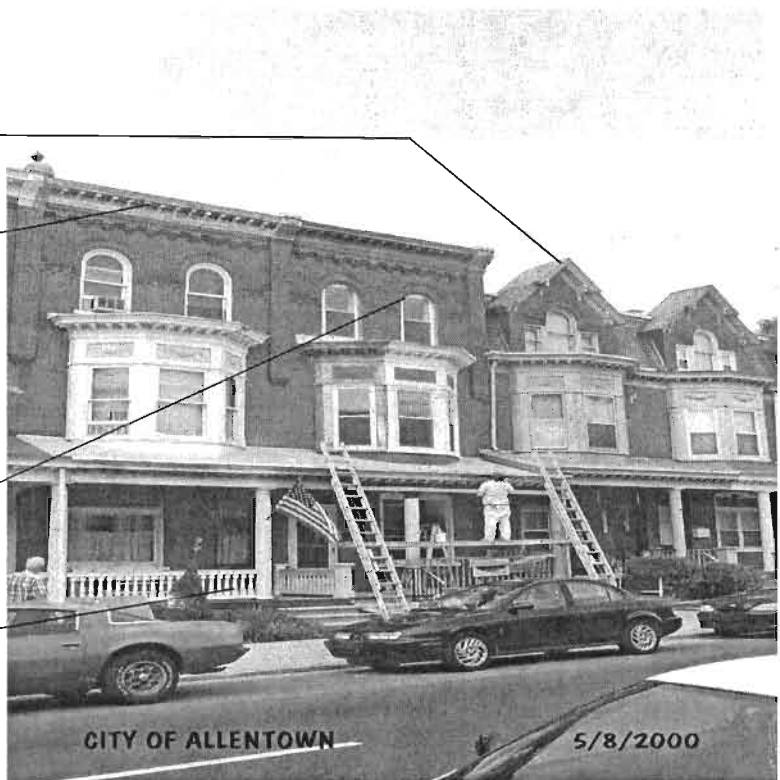
Shingle

- Wooden shingle is the predominant wall cladding material



Queen Anne

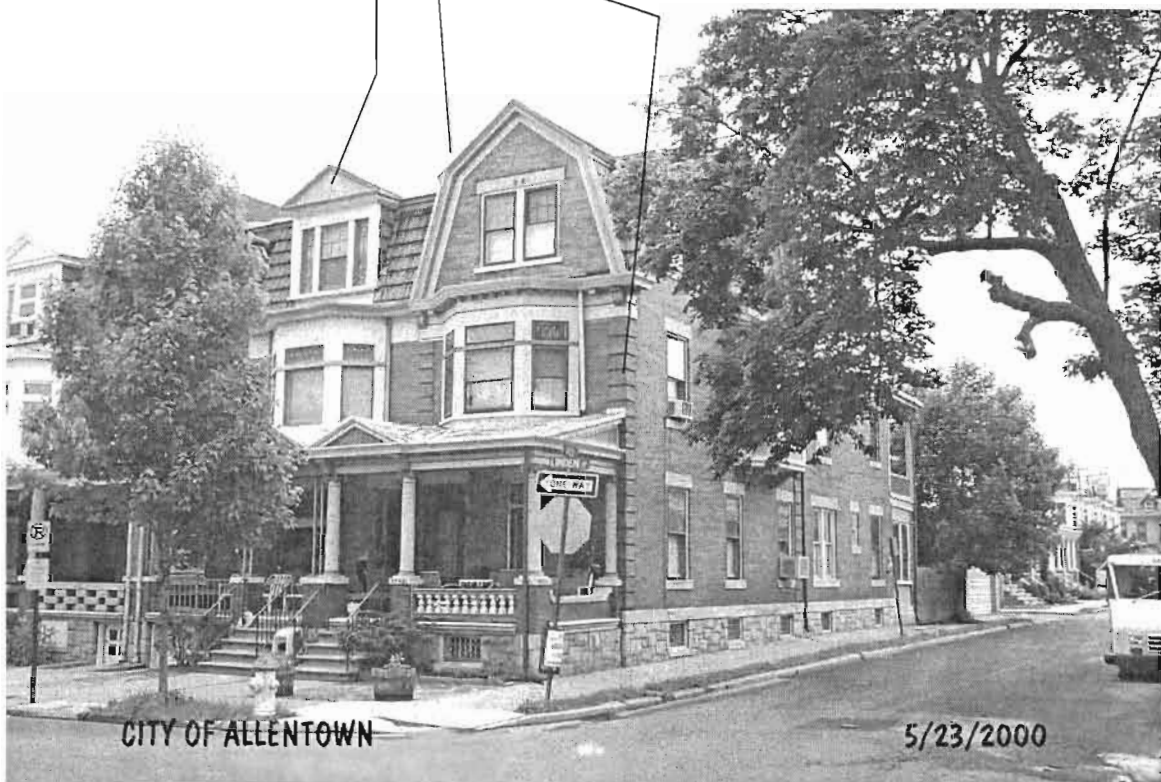
- Various roof shapes along the row
- Gabled dormers
- Decorative cornices (wood or brick)
- Long windows
- Undivided window sashes
- Patterned brick on building face, at cornice, around windows
- Decorative woodwork: turned posts, carved brackets, window details



Late 19th Century/ Early 20th Century Revivals

Colonial Revival

- Gambrel roof
- Hipped roof
- Pediment dormers
- Modillion at roofline, bay, porch
- Divided upper sash windows
- Pediment at entry
- Classical columns at porch
- Quoins at building corners



West Park Architectural Elements Treatment Matrix

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Preferred Treatment</u>	<u>Acceptable Treatment</u>
Standard Windows	Repair existing or replace with identical materials, size, style and configuration.	Replacement of existing with alternative materials of the same size, style and configuration.
Leaded/Stain Glass Windows	Every attempt should be made to retain and repair existing materials.	If windows are beyond repair they should be replaced with windows of the same size, style, material and configuration.
Doors	Repair existing. If original exterior front door is beyond repair, relocate original vestibule door, if of the same style, to the exterior.	Replace existing damaged door with a door of of the same size, style and material.
Roofs (General)	Retain existing roofing material and replace damaged components with the same shape, size and color material.	Replacement of existing roofing material with new or different material of a similar shape, size and color.
Clay Tile/Terra Cotta Roofs*	Deteriorated clay roofs should be repaired in kind rather than replaced whenever feasible.	If repair is not possible and replacement is proposed the new roofing material should be of a similar shape, size and color.
Porch Railing/Columns	Retain existing elements through the use of epoxies and joining techniques to repair damaged elements.	Replacement of elements with similar materials of the same shape and size.

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Preferred Treatment</u>	<u>Acceptable Treatment</u>
Hand Rails	Original hand rails should be retained.	Replacement rails should be similar in design and style to the originals. Where no hand rail exists a simple wrought iron or wood rail could be appropriate.
Steps	Retain existing steps by repairing with the same material. Also damaged material could be repaired with the use of epoxies with a similar finished appearance.	Replacement of steps with similar material with the same shape, size and appearance.
Chimneys	Repair existing material with the same material.	Replace existing material with new material of a similar appearance. Decorative features should be reproduced when feasible.
Ornamental Fence	Existing decorative and ornamental fences should be retained.	If a fence is damaged beyond repair the replacement fence should be similar in style and size to the original.
Privacy Fence	Privacy fencing should be of a wood material and placed at the rear of the property.	On a case by case basis alternative materials will be reviewed (i.e. vinyl, aluminum).
Lights	Retain existing lights which are original to the structure.	Replacement of original lights with lights of a similar style and scale. Where no light previously existed the new light should be in keeping with the scale and style of the structure.

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Preferred Treatment</u>	<u>Acceptable Treatment</u>
Accessory Buildings	Retain all buildings through routine maintenance.	Demolition of structures will be handled on a case by case basis. Some of the factors used to evaluate the appropriateness of a demolition are, the location of the structure, the design of the structure itself, the nature of the surrounding area and the physical condition of the structure.
Exterior Walls	Maintain and repair original wall material.	Replacement of original wall material with materials similar in texture, shape and appearance. Removal of modern materials to reveal original wall materials is usually encouraged if the original material is found to be in good condition. The covering of original wall material with any other material is always discouraged.

* Due to the number of clay tile/ terra cotta roofs found in the West Park Historic District and their absence in both Old Allentown and Old Fairgrounds Historic Districts, a separate treatment category was established.